



## VANCE B. GRANNIS, JR.

This year's recipient of the "Volunteer of the Year" award, Vance B. Grannis, Jr. was not present at the Professional Responsibility Seminar because he was vacationing with his family at their cabin on Lake Superior, in Tofte, Minnesota. They were enjoying the beautiful Fall color. See Picture. Vance and his wife, Darlene, have been married 55 years and have three children, Chip, Vaughn, and Debra. They live in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

**Professional Address:** Grannis & Hauge, P.A.  
200 Town Centre Professional Building  
1260 Yankee Doodle Road  
Eagan, Minnesota 55121-2201

**Education:** South St. Paul High School; graduated 1955  
University of Minnesota Law School; graduated 1960 B.S.L. Cum Laude

### Admitted to Practice:

- State of Minnesota License No. 36821 (10/4/60)
- State of Wisconsin License No. 236418 (10/18/88)
- U.S. District Court of Minnesota (9/28/61)
- U.S. 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals (10/20/72)
- U.S. Supreme Court (12/10/79)

### Professional Memberships:

- Minnesota State Bar Association
- Wisconsin Bar Association
- American Trial Lawyers Association
- Dakota County Bar Association
- 1<sup>st</sup> District Bar Association
- Assistant Recent Case Editor of the Minnesota Law Review
- First Mayor of Inver Grove Heights (1965-1968)
- Special Municipal Judge in South St. Paul, MN (1970-1971)
- Former Commercial and No Fault Arbitrator for American Arbitration Association
- Former Mediator on State Court Administrator's Approved Mediator Roster
- Served on First District Ethics Committee for 33 years

- Former part-time volunteer police lieutenant with the Inver Grove Heights Police Reserve for 20 years
- Former Board Member of the International Society of Zooculturalists
- Former Board Member, now Honorary Board Member, Carpenter Nature Center
- Former Board Member of Minnesota Valley Humane Society
- Former Board Member International Wild Waterfowl Association
- Former President of Minnesota Pheasant and Waterfowl Association

### **Legal Background:**

Some say the legal profession is in Vance's genes. He is the third generation of Grannis attorneys. He became an attorney and in 1960 joined the firm of Grannis & Grannis, with his grandfather, David L. Grannis, Sr., father, Vance B. Grannis, Sr., and uncle, David L. Grannis, Jr. His grandfather had started the firm in South St. Paul in 1906. His cousin David L. Grannis III is another third generation attorney and Dave's wife Joyce is also an attorney. Vance's son Chip, a fourth generation attorney, is an Assistant Dakota County Attorney.

Vance's law practice has been general in matter and includes: personal injury, construction litigation, real estate, probate, municipal law (including almost 30 years as Burnsville City Attorney and 20 years as Inver Grove Heights prosecuting attorney), family law, estate planning, corporate and business law, appellate work in State and Federal court, prosecution and criminal defense.

From his father Vance learned to be thorough in his legal research. (This was in the days before computers and WestLaw.) His dad told the story of the older attorney who had a client, who was a farmer, come in and wanted to know if he could sue a trucking company that failed to deliver the farmer's entire crop of cranberries on time, causing them to spoil. The farmer wanted to sue for the loss of his crop which would have been his entire year's income. The older attorney assured the client the firm would thoroughly research the matter to see if there was a basis to make a claim. The older attorney then asked one of the younger attorneys to research the law to see if he could find a case directly on point. The next day the younger attorney came in with a big smile and told the older attorney their client should definitely win the case. He said he had found a case where a farmer had shipped a load of strawberries to a grocer. The strawberries were contracted to arrive at the grocer's within 24 hours. However, due to the shipper's negligence, it took a week for the strawberries to arrive. The strawberries were rotten and the grocer refused to pay for them. The farmer sued the shipper and recovered the full value of the strawberries. The older attorney agreed that sounded like a pretty good case, but he directed the younger attorney to keep researching to see if he could find a "cranberry case" instead of the strawberry case.

Vance's uncle, David L. Grannis, Jr., not only showed him important trial strategies, but also got Vance started on what turned out to be his 33 years of service on the First District Ethics Committee. Prior to Vance's appointment to the Committee, his uncle David L. Grannis, Jr. served many years on the Committee.

Vance's grandfather was not only an attorney but also had a dairy farm on the property where Vance now lives and is creating an Environment Education Center. Thus, Vance not only learned a lot about law from his grandfather but also a love for animals and protecting the environment. Vance says his grandfather was a conservationist long before anyone knew what that term meant. As a teenager when Vance traveled with his grandfather to farms throughout Dakota County the

farmers would tell Vance what a great man his grandfather was and how his grandfather had helped solved their legal problems, usually at little or no cost. Later, when as a young attorney Vance traveled to courtrooms anywhere in the state, in any of the 10 Judicial Districts, inevitably the judges and other attorneys would relate stories of their experiences with his father and uncle and how they respected their legal ability.

Vance's goal has been to maintain the reputation and respect established by his grandfather, father and uncle for integrity, honesty, and first class legal service.

### **Community Involvement:**

During the past 55 years, in addition to his legal practice and family, Vance has made time to be involved in many community and civic affairs including:

- Member First District Ethics Committee
- Chamber of Commerce
- Planning Commission
- Police Reserve
- Numerous School District and City Task Forces
- Elementary School Boys and Girls Basketball Coach
- Member of the Board of Directors of Carpenter Nature Center, Minnesota Valley Humane Society, Minnesota Iris Society and a number of avicultural organizations.

His hobbies have included:

- Breeding and raising pleasure riding horses
- Preserving endangered species through propagation of captive bred wildlife
- Flower gardening

Currently he is in the process of establishing an Outdoor Skills and Environmental Education Center as part of the Darvan Acres Nature Center on land in Inver Grove Heights that was formerly part of his grandfather's farm.

Some of the goals of the Environmental Education Center are:

1. Educating children about the natural environment to stimulate their thinking, sense of adventure and desire to learn more in other areas. Studies have shown that children exposed to the natural world make better engineers, doctors, teachers, scientists and lawyers.
2. To showcase current technology in geothermal heating and cooling, solar energy and wind technology.
3. To foster innovation and problem solving for the environment as its core value.
4. To help thousands of children avoid having a "Nature Deficit Disorder" and to see that they are not left inside with their electronic toys, but are exposed to nature where they will learn to recognize and identify plants, insects, birds, amphibians and other animals in their natural environment.